

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2427

E.O. 11652: XGDS (4)

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: KIM YONG-SAM POINTS OUT DANGERS IN ROKG CRACKDOWN

SUMMARY: NDP PRESIDENT KIM YONG-SAM HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO EMBOFF OVER RECENT ROKG CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT. HE REJECTED GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY JUSTIFICATION FOR HARSH MEASURES, BUT EXPRESSED FEAR THAT CONSTANT EMPHASIS ON IMMINENT ATTACK COULD EVENTUALLY RESULT IN ACTUAL HOSTILITIES. KIM CALLED ON U.S. TO REASON WITH PRESIDENT PARK. END SUMMARY.

1. KIM YONG-SAM DURING APRIL 10 MEETING WITH EMBOFF WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF RECENT ROKG CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT. KIM SAID RECENT ACTIONS SUCH AS EXECUTION PRP EMERGENCY MEASURE PRISONERS, PROMULGATION EMERGENCY MEASURE NO. 7, NEW ANTI-SLANDER LAW, AND REARREST OF OUTSPOKEN CRITICS SUCH AS POET KIM CHI HA AND LAWYER HAN SUNG-HON INDICATE THAT PRESIDENT PARK IS CLEARLY WARNING HIS CRITICS THAT HE WILL TAKE ANY MEASURE NECESSARY TO RETAIN POWER.

2. KIM REJECTED ANY JUSTIFICATION FOR ABOVE ACTIONS IN TERMS OF NATIONAL SECURITY. HE SAID THAT NDP SAW
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NO DIRECT THREAT TO ROK DUE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA SITUATION

AND DISCUSSED LIMITATIONS IN DRAWING HISTORICAL PARALLEL BETWEEN KOREA AND VIETNAM. KIM ALSO EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS THEMSELVES BELIEVED COUNTRY IN IMMINENT DANGER. HE SAID THEY WERE "LYING" FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES.

3. NDP PRESIDENT ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE FEARED CONSTANT ROKG REFERENCES TO A STATE OF WAR AND TO DEFENDING SEOUL AT ALL COSTS COULD RESULT IN EITHER: (A) THE NORTH MISCALCULATING THE SOUTH'S WILL TO FIGHT AND THUS INITIATING HOSTILE ACTION, OR (B) THE ROKG EVENTUALLY PERCIPITATING A LIMITED CONFLICT ON THE DMZ TO GIVE CREDIBILITY TO ITS CHARGES.

4. KIM EXPRESSED FEAR THAT, EVENTUALLY, CONSTANT SUPPRESSION HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD ALSO WEAKEN ROK WILL TO RESIST THE NORTH; IN FACT HE SAID THIS TREND IS ALREADY VISIBLE. HE ALSO WORRIED THAT US COULD NOT INDEFINITELY SUPPORT A DICTATORIAL GOVERNMENT AND THAT US TROOPS WOULD BE REMOVED JUST AT THE TIME WHEN SERIOUS POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE ROK MAKES THEIR PRESENCE VITAL AS A DETERRENT. KIM NOTED THAT DISSENT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW STRONGER IN SPITE OF ROKG EFFORTS AT SUPPRESSION.

5. KIM NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT IS LIKE A MAN ON A BICYCLE; HE CAN'T STOP OR HE WILL FALL OFF. KIM SAID THAT SINCE THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORS TO A MAN REFUSE TO DIFFER WITH OR DELIVER BAD NEWS TO PRESIDENT PARK, A US REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD MAKE A PERSONAL APPEAL TO PRESIDENT FOR A MORE MODERATE AND REASONABLE POLICY.

6. EMBOFF POINTED OUT TO KIM THAT USG HAS PRIVATELY MADE KNOWN ITS CONCERNS OVER DOMESTIC SITUATIONTO VARIOUS LEVELS ROKG, AND ALSO REFERRED TO DEPT SPOKESMAN'S PUBLIC STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON EXECUTION PRP PRISONERS. HOWEVER, EMBOFF SAID EMBASSY WOULD PASS ON KIM'S CONCERN TO DEPT. EMBOFF ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN US/ROK SECURITY RELATIONSHIP. KIM SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THIS BUT WAS CONCERNED WITH THE FUTURE.
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